



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## MANTELS, FENDERS, AND FIRE-IRONS.\*

THE mantelpiece should be an important feature in any room. In the dining-room it may be of unpolished mahogany, or walnut, or painted pine, with a lining of black or golden Sienna marble; the lower panels may be filled in with good painted subject tiles, or delicate carving of fruit, the main shelf sufficiently broad to take, if necessary, the various ornaments, useful or otherwise, which are wanted, with perhaps a centre panel for a good portrait or subject picture, framed in boldly carved moulding; round it, on either side, might be plain panelling, carried up to the ceiling line, with recesses for sculpture or bronzes, or tiers of shelves, for those whose tastes lie in china or other bric-à-brac; the top perhaps finished with a bold curved cove, filled in with stamped leather or decorative enrichment.

For the drawing-room and library I would suggest designed mantels of similar character, but carried out to meet the special requirements of the two rooms; in the one might be subdued delicate embroidery, painted tiles, or Japanese lacquer panels, with recessed shelves lined with velvet, to set off the china or glass, the sides formed into groups of useful shelves or brackets, and the centre filled with a splayed Venetian glass, of not too great a height from the ground to be rendered useless, and of sufficient size to reflect the works of art in the room, and thus add to its cheerfulness and charm.

In the library I would arrange small flanking cupboards for cigars or for tobacco for those who smoke, with shelves for china or books, to carry on the general furniture of the room, so that the mantelpiece should not appear as the one break in the line. But, above all, please to understand that these mantelpieces should be designed so as to be not mere objects of ornament, but absolutely useful as pieces of furniture. Why should not flanking cupboards be provided for guns, swords, and fishing-rods, and the various paraphernalia of a sportsman or of a soldier? If the cupboards be made air and dust-tight, all these belongings, which, to their detriment, are generally stowed away in cases and cupboards, may be kept more carefully, and add materially to the general appearance of the room, giving it at once an air of use as well as of comfort.

For not a very large sum you may get a really good mantelpiece, the fireplace lined with tiles of good design, and a dog-grate that shall burn coals or wood in the winter, or be fitted to hold flowers in the summer-time; and for almost the price of an ordinary marble mantel, you may in your bedrooms get one of painted pine, with art tiles that will not offend the eye whenever you look upon them.

In the smaller bedrooms or dressing-rooms, where space is not over-ample, I see no reason why the mantelpiece should not, to a certain extent, be formed into a sort of dressing-table. Above the shelf, which adapts itself easily for all dressing paraphernalia, on either side, might be formed small cupboards, useful for many purposes, the centre spaces between being filled up by a sufficiently large looking-glass, flanked with light movable brackets for gas or candles, the whole made of pine stained and polished, or painted and varnished, or of some other inexpensive wood.

An arrangement of this kind would naturally not be

suitable for the more important work of a lady's toilet; but in small bachelor or dressing-rooms, it would, I venture to think, be found sufficient for all purposes, and infinitely better than the movable table, which generally occupies the whole window space, the white dressing-table cover of which, however charming it

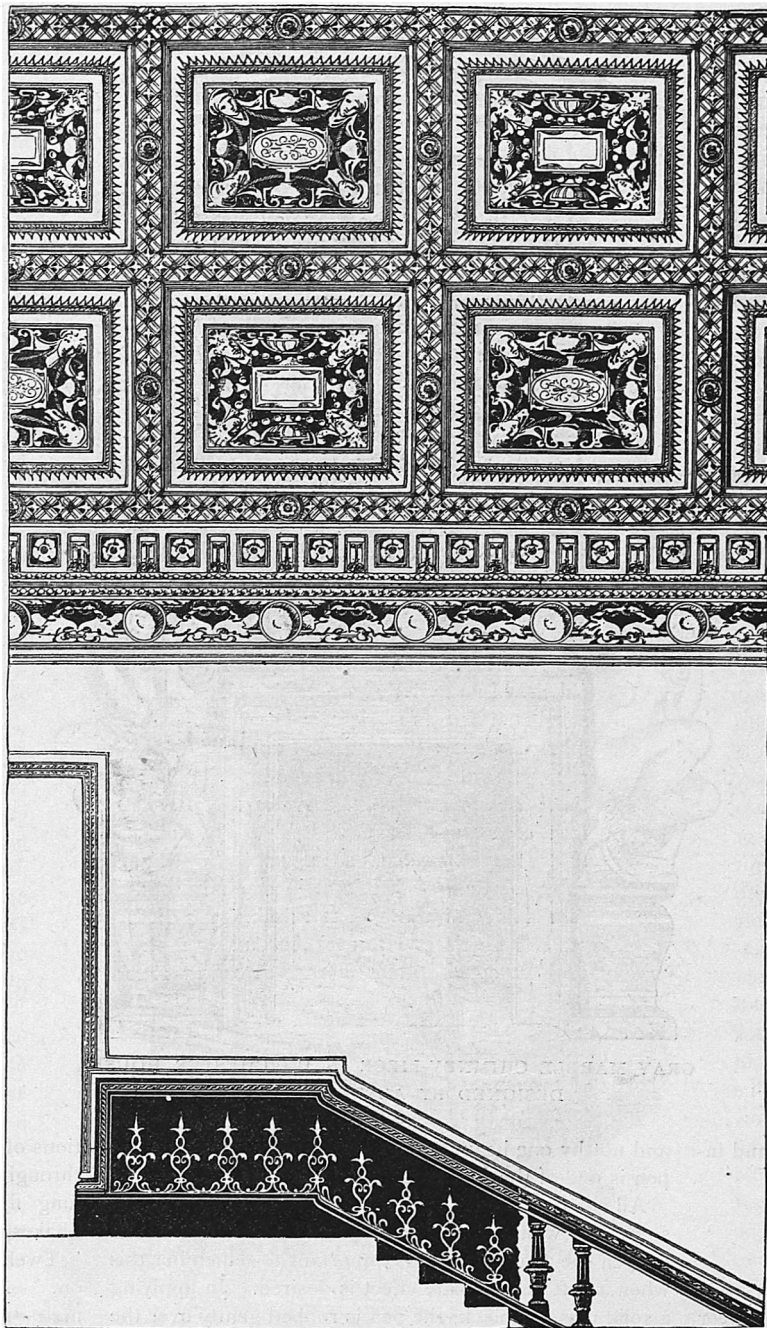
laid-on ormolu mouldings, all necessitating a large amount of time and labor in keeping bright and clean. As a rule, these grates are as extravagant as they are ugly, consuming a maximum quantity of coal, and giving out a minimum amount of heat; as a consequence all kinds of attempts are made to diminish the consumption and increase the heat, by inserting fire-lump sides or balls, and putting in iron false bottoms. All these makeshifts are unsatisfactory. There is no reason why you should not have good artistic grates, combined with a maximum amount of heat from the coal consumed; and if the room be large, and access can be got to the external air by means of many of the now well-known ventilating grates, pure warmed fresh air can be supplied at will, to add to the warmth and comfort of the rooms, at a comparatively small expense.

Among the general articles of furniture associated with modern fireplaces, nothing can be worse than the hideous and commonplace fenders of cast-iron or burnished steel, with ormolu enrichments laid on, and which are either constantly coming unscrewed, or offering traps for the destruction of ladies' dresses by their projecting points and so-called ornaments. Beyond all this, they are a constant source of annoyance, by collecting dust and dirt in their scroll-pattern angles, and under the raised iron or steel bottoms. They are, if of steel, elaborately burnished and chased, eminently costly, and involve a large expenditure of time and trouble, equally with the grate of similar character, to keep clean. My advice to you is to get rid of them at once, sell them for what they will fetch, and in lieu of what, at its best, is a clumsy and inartistic protection from the falling cinders and hot ashes, substitute plain polished marble or hard stone fenders. For all practical purposes these are better than the miserable iron or steel fenders, are not likely to get in the way of dresses, with ordinary fair treatment are not likely to get chipped or broken, and are much more pleasant and artistic to look at. Only take care that they are not made of the usual section—that is to say, with a face at right angles to the hearth, rendering it difficult to properly brush out the dust and dirt from the angles. Let the section be curved or splayed down gradually to the hearth surface, so as to, in fact, form only a moulded frame, without offering any corners or right angles for the collection of dirt.

Fire-irons should be as plain as possible, their purpose being eminently for use, not show, and these can lie either on the marble fender or on plain simple movable stands, and are better than all the twisted forms and all the pierced pattern abominations which make up the general patterns.

If you object to marble or stone fenders, I suggest that, instead of all the bad cast-iron and ormolu ornamentation, you should have a simply designed high fender, say two feet high, made of plain wrought-iron bars, and filled in with pierced brass work, by which means you will obtain not only additional protection, but in part a useful screen from the fire.

If only an additional protection be required, I suggest a movable screen about two feet high, made with a plain polished wrought-iron or steel frame, with good ornamental terminals, and filled in with brass or steel wire netting, to stand inside the marble fender. In this way protection is obtained from the fire surface in the grate, without materially interfering with the heat thrown into the room,



CEILING AND STAIRCASE DECORATION AT THE HOUSE OF LADY ASHBURNHAM. DESIGNED BY ALFRED STEVENS.

may be when first put on, too soon gets smeared and spotted with the blacks and dust which blow in whenever the window is opened, or find their way mysteriously but surely through cracks and crevices, one knows not how, to the certain ruin, as regards cleanliness, of everything within their reach.



OVERDOOR DECORATION FOR A MUSIC-ROOM.

In ordinary bedrooms, a plain pine painted and varnished mantel can be put up at a very small expense.

Before leaving the subject of fireplaces, let me say a few words about grates and fenders. As a rule, nothing can be worse in taste and design than these: the grates are not only hideous in shape, but in the better rooms of the house are often of burnished steel with

\* Adapted and abridged from a lecture recently delivered by Robert W. Edis in London.